

Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Revenue Committee

Final Meeting Summary

October 7, 1998

Committee members present: Skip Rowley, Chair Tim Ceis, Roger Dormaier, Representative Ed Murray, Dale Nusbaum, Larry Pursley, Senator Eugene Prince, Judy Wilson

Chairman Skip Rowley opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and asked those present to introduce themselves. He reviewed the Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) mission and vision statements developed by the Steering Committee. The chairs of the three committees, Administration, Investment Strategies and Revenue have met several times to discuss areas of overlap and common goals. The Revenue Committee's recommendations are likely to be made after the other two committees have developed preliminary recommendations. The committee will, in the meantime, gain an understanding of key revenue issues. All issues are on the table and members will have the opportunity to evaluate the feasibility of the revenue options during the process.

Communications consultant Barbara Smith outlined the basic communication strategies proposed for the BRC and the committee. They include a speakers' bureau, mailings, a website, field briefings and work with the media.

Committee Operations

Project Manager Kjris Lund outlined the operating rules relating to open public meetings, public notice and public comment. These guidelines will be formally adopted by the full BRC at its October 14 meeting. Meeting summaries will be prepared and meetings will be recorded for anyone wishing a verbatim transcript, at cost.

Chairman Rowley referred members to ground rules for the committee and proposed that members agree to operate by these rules.

Discussion of Committee Work Plan

Facilitator Milenko Matanovic opened the discussion by suggesting that the committee needed to accomplish four tasks during its meeting:

- Agree on a committee charter
- Identify a topic list
- Identify subjects on which they need more information, and
- Discuss outreach

He also recommended several additional ground rules: industrial strength listening, respect (“Tough on ideas, Gentle on people”), and teamwork.

Draft Charter for the Revenue Committee

Members were asked to review the draft charter developed by the Steering Committee. Discussion ensued about how the Committee could determine revenue recommendations without first identifying needs. Chairman Rowley reminded members that another committee was charged with that task.

Additional discussion included the following points:

- The determination of an “achievable” revenue plan may require much debate.
- Committee members should agree on criteria to determine workable revenue sources.
- Recommendations can only succeed with public awareness of transportation needs.
- The Revenue Committee should coordinate closely with the Investment Strategies Committee, including joint meetings.
- The committee should consider the transportation system in its examination.
- The committee should look at equity issues, concurrency, long term stability, any shifts over time.

Revised Charter

- Evaluate existing *federal, state, county and city* transportation funding mechanisms.
- Evaluate potential *federal, state, county and city* transportation funding mechanisms.
- Make recommendations on a realistic, achievable plan for funding transportation programs, projects, and services over the next twenty years.

Members identified the following topics for committee consideration:

Existing Funding Mechanisms

- All sources at city, county, state and federal levels
- All modal sources
- All available sources, regardless of whether currently in use
- Misconceptions, e.g., use of MVET for transportation
- Distribution of sources, including how they are divided
- Subsidies
- Capital, operational and maintenance fund sources
- Private sources
- Legal constraints on use of sources
- Year 2000 issues
- Concurrency issues
- Recent (5-year) history of fund sources
- Relationship of funding sources to the state’s economy.

Potential Funding Mechanisms

- Evaluate what other states/countries do
- Congestion pricing
- Changing the 18th amendment to the Washington State Constitution
- Uses/transfer of the MVET to transportation
- Universe of funding options, both those not used and those under-used
- User fees
- Gas tax and its indexing
- Perceptions about sources
- Public-private partnerships, including changing the legislation
- Tolls

What is Needed to Move the Process Forward?

The following items were proposed:

- Brief narrative summaries of revenue sources
- Comparative charts of revenue sources with summaries and criteria
- Specifics on city and county funding
- The federal government role, including TEA-21
- A summary of the CTED infrastructure study findings
- Preliminary criteria to help the committee evaluate options

Staff were asked to prepare a work plan of topics and briefings for the next three months that would, when complete, be a primer on transportation funding.

Communications Plan

Members discussed what information was available on public attitudes on transportation funding and the potential need for polling research. Members agreed that how questions were asked was critical in any research. A summary of current polling and research should be prepared and any gaps or additional research needs should be identified. Laird Harris Public Affairs will conduct this analysis and report back to the committee.

Discussion focused on what audiences the BRC should be targeting, whether primarily decision makers or more generally a public audience. Members agreed that all audiences needed to be reached as decision maker views will reflect the mood of the broader public. Suggestions for reaching out included:

- Chambers of commerce, Rotary Clubs, grange groups
- Media including
- Chair presentations to legislative committees during the upcoming session

It was agreed that any public messages should focus on products, not process. Any initial message is that all issues are on the table and there are no preconceived solutions.

Public Comment

Dean Claussen of the Eastside Transportation Committee in Bellevue addressed the committee, saying that the Legislature has not had the will to do what is needed which is to raise the gas tax and index it to inflation. The public is now looking to the BRC to achieve this goal.

Conclusion

Committee members agreed they did not need to meet on the morning of October 14 as previously scheduled. Chairman Rowley adjourned the meeting.